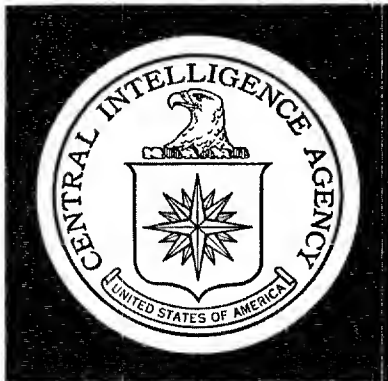


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[Vietnam: Several reports now point to this weekend as the kickoff time for a Communist offensive in South Vietnam.

One rallier, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
gives 22 February as the date for an attack on Saigon. An agent report from Da Nang states that an attack will occur in that area on the same date.

Communist forces are in position in all four corps areas to launch attacks on allied bases and some urban centers. The major concentration of enemy main force units remains in III Corps, where reports persist that the Communists intend to hit Saigon.

Two prisoners from the Communist 9th Division provide additional evidence that the enemy intends to strike Saigon shortly. One stated that the 272nd Regiment recently underwent training for city fighting and has orders to move to the Long An - Hau Nghia Province area within 10 days. Another prisoner, from the 271st Regiment, was captured just six miles west of Saigon while reconnoitering approach routes to the city. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] (Map)]

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Arab States - Israel: There is outrage in Israel over the Arab terrorist attack on the El Al aircraft at Zurich, but Tel Aviv has given no hard clues as to where it intends to strike in retaliation.

The probability of an Israeli reprisal action is high. Israeli Minister of Transport Carmel made clear in a speech in the Knesset that Israel would not tolerate such attacks, and that Israel held the attackers, those who equipped them, and the states in which the operation was planned all responsible. He flatly stated that the two attacks on El Al planes and the hijacking of another to Algiers were planned in Lebanon. Beirut quickly denied that the Zurich gunmen passed through Lebanon.

In another move, Fatah, the principal commando organization, publicly dissociated itself from the attack in Zurich, stating that Fatah does not undertake activities outside of Israel and has never attacked nonmilitary targets.

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Pakistan: The fate of long-awaited government-opposition talks remains highly uncertain.

Confusion reigned in Rawalpindi yesterday after last-minute decisions by six prominent opposition leaders to boycott the talks. Leaders of the moderate opposition coalition, who earlier agreed to meet on 19 February with President Ayub, reacted by requesting postponement of the talks, and then changed their minds, deciding to send a single representative instead of a complete delegation. This falls short of Ayub's proposal for wide-ranging dialogue with the entire political opposition.

The chief stumbling block to the talks was the announcement on 18 February by Mujibur Rahman, a popular East Pakistani opposition leader currently on trial for treason, that he would attend only if the conspiracy case against him were quashed. The coalition leaders decided that they could not negotiate as planned without Mujibur and his party, the largest and most important coalition component. Five noncoalition leaders, including ex - foreign minister Bhutto, also declined the invitation.

Continuing violence, army-enforced curfews, and the deaths yesterday of several antigovernment demonstrators also figured in the request for postponement. Opposition leaders, including Bhutto, warned that a meeting would be impossible under existing conditions.

Coalition leaders continued their consultations yesterday. If the talks with Ayub ever do get under way, it is unlikely that they can end disorders completely or produce a workable compromise. Although Ayub is apparently willing to make significant constitutional changes, any concessions he may offer will almost certainly be unacceptable to leftists and to militant students who continue to denounce any negotiations with the regime. [REDACTED]

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Peru: Trouble could arise if the military government interferes with the public meeting the opposition APRA party has scheduled for 21 February.

APRA's secretary general has ordered select party groups to "take to the streets" and carry out terrorist acts if the government prevents the public celebration of the 74th birthday of the party's founder and chief, Haya de la Torre. Haya, the army's long-time enemy, is scheduled to return from voluntary exile in Europe for the celebration, and there are rumors that the government will prevent his entering the country or find a pretext for stopping the celebration.

APRA leaders in the country have sought to assure President Velasco that the party will avoid any activities detrimental to the government and will support the nationalistic steps he has taken recently. The government has given no clear indication of its plans regarding the celebration. Some Apristas believe Velasco would welcome a speech by Haya, in which he would almost have to support the government's action against the International Petroleum Company; others, however, say that Velasco cannot afford to let APRA demonstrate the extent of its following.

[REDACTED]

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Colombia-USSR: The owner of a private Colombian airline may be negotiating for Soviet aircraft to set up a shuttle service for Colombia's three busiest cities.

He is rumored to be enthusiastic, following a recent trip to Moscow, over prospects for obtaining three YAK-40 airliners in exchange for coffee. Coffee has been the chief basis of barter, much of it for Soviet vehicles, by which imports from the USSR have doubled in value each year since 1964. They still remain a very small percentage of total Colombian imports.

Previously reported negotiations for the introduction of Soviet transport planes into Colombia have come to nothing, and the current effort would probably require President Lleras' approval. The alleged interest of one of Lleras' close advisers and the importance of coffee barter to Colombia plus the persistence of reports of Colombian interests in Soviet civilian aircraft give the report some credibility. The YAK-40s will not be available until late this year, however, and then only in limited quantities.

A scheme by a rival airline to use US aircraft on the potentially lucrative shuttle route in mountainous but fast-developing areas of Colombia could pre-empt the deal with the Soviets unless President Lleras sees an overriding advantage in disposing of the required quantity of coffee.

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West Germany: The Ministry of Defense has released a "White Book" which reaffirms Germany's support of NATO's flexible response strategy while stressing the need for a strong forward defense.

This strategy requires that the level of response be geared to the level of aggression. The book, approved by the cabinet last week, concludes that emphasis should be given to the development of conventional military resources as an important part of the flexible response strategy.

Germany has lacked confidence in NATO's tactical capabilities, and has implied a need for the more rapid use of nuclear weapons. Recently, however, Bonn has sought to edge closer to the NATO doctrine. Together with the UK, it has just completed a study on the possibilities of using tactical nuclear weapons on German soil.

In moving toward the flexible response strategy, Germany plans to improve the capabilities of its conventional forces. Their size is to be increased from the present 441,600 to a constant level of 460,000, backed by trainees so that combat readiness will not be impaired by personnel turnover. Weapons are to be modernized through foreign procurement, cooperative ventures, and domestic production. Expenditures for equipment will account for more than a quarter of the total defense budget, which will rise from the current annual level of \$4.75 billion to \$5.25 billion in 1973.

With these improvements, West Germany will have done more to support the flexible response doctrine than has any other European member of NATO.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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NOTES

USSR-Rumania: Yesterday Warsaw Pact Commander Yakubovsky and Soviet First Deputy Foreign Minister Kuznetsov met with top Rumanian leaders in Bucharest. The meeting followed by six days a Warsaw Pact meeting in East Germany which had been chaired by Yakubovsky and attended by the Rumanians. Neither the Soviet nor the Rumanian announcement of yesterday's meeting gave any hint of the purpose of the visit; both merely reported that it took place in a "warm and comradely atmosphere." [REDACTED]

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Czechoslovakia-USSR: Czechoslovak Defense Minister Dzur will lead a military delegation to Moscow on 21 February at the invitation of Soviet Defense Minister Grechko. The visit appears to be another in the series of high-level contacts between Czechoslovak and Russian party and government officials, which are designed to give the impression of "normalization" of relations. There are no known plans to change the status of the Soviet occupation forces. [REDACTED]

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Tanzania: President Nyerere informed Ottawa on 17 February that its military training programs for the Tanzanian Army and Air Force will not be renewed when the present agreements expire in 1970. Nyerere's decision, coming on the heels of a Chinese Communist survey of local airfields, suggests that he is counting on Peking to provide jet aircraft and training for his air force. The Chinese are already training and equipping elements of the army, navy, and police. The departure of the 86 Canadian advisers will remove one of the last sources of Western influence in Tanzania. [REDACTED]

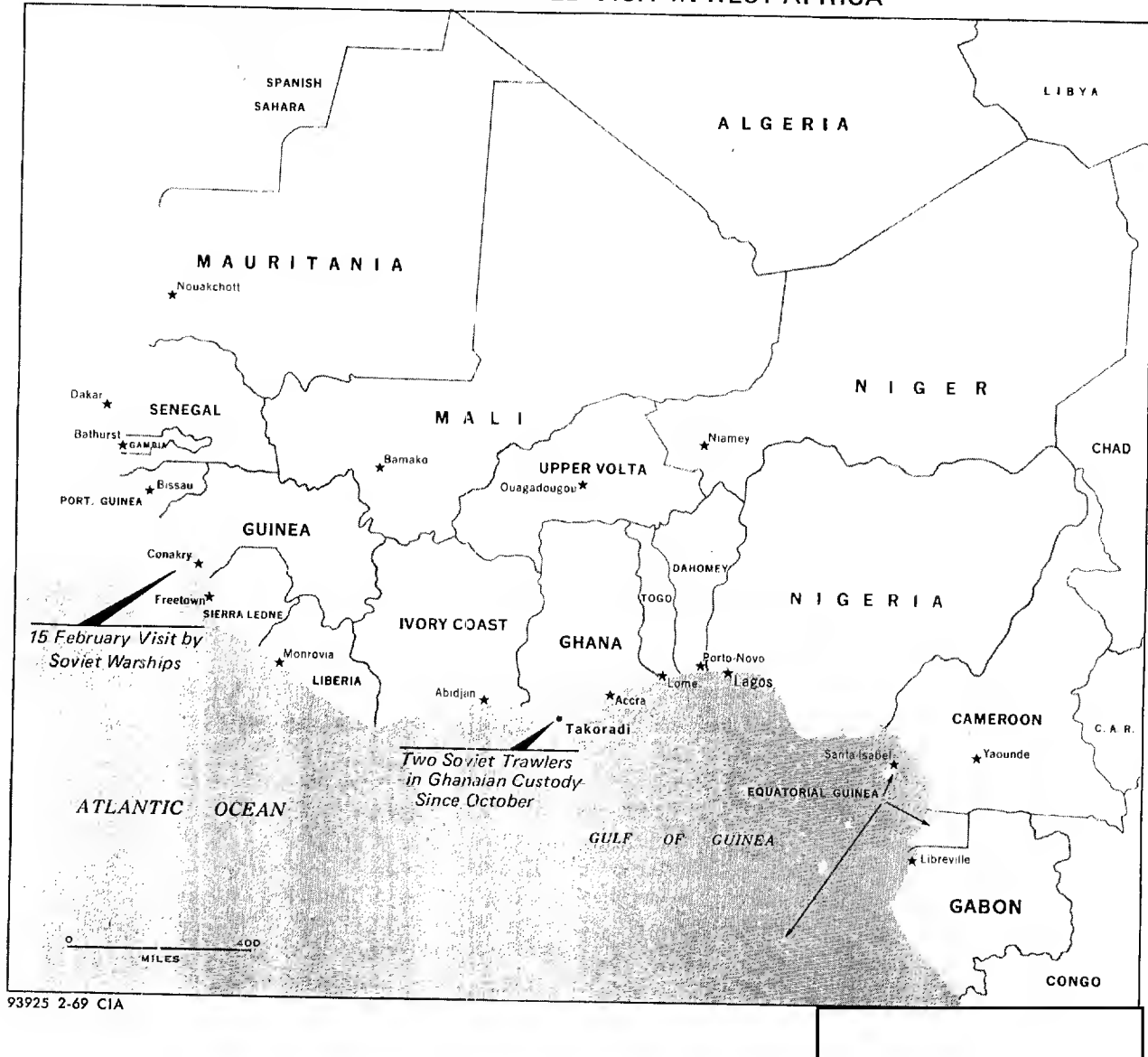
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SOVIET WARSHIPS MAKE UNPRECEDENTED VISIT IN WEST AFRICA



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USSR - West Africa: Four Soviet naval ships--two guided-missile destroyers, a submarine, and an oiler--arrived in Guinea on 15 February without advance notice, and may call at other West African ports as well. [redacted] the Soviet ships will visit Lagos in connection with Soviet Army Day on 23 February. Soviet combatant ships have never before visited West Africa. Moscow may hope this "showing of the flag" will help to obtain the release of two Soviet trawlers and their crews detained by Ghana since last October. [redacted]

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Belgium: Foreign Minister Harmel is stressing Brussels' intention to move slowly in changing its China policy. [redacted]

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[redacted] he says that Belgium "in essence" has already recognized the Communists as the government of the mainland by means of a well-circulated letter to the president of the UN General Assembly in November 1968. The question of diplomatic relations with Peking, [redacted] hinges on the results of current Canadian and Italian initiatives. [redacted]

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[redacted] Belgium is firmly against taking any action in the UN that could lead to Taiwan's expulsion. [redacted]

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